

## ***Other Diagnostic Services***

Greenhouse Growth Media

Insects and Arthropods

Nematode Analysis

Plant Tissue Analysis

Soil Nitrate Testing

Weed and Plant Analysis

## ***For more information contact***

MSU Extension - Bay County  
515 Center Avenue, Suite 301  
Bay City, Michigan 48708-5124

(989) 895-4026 Voice  
(989) 895-4217 Fax

msue09@msu.edu  
www.baycounty-mi.gov/MSUE

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***All other versions obsolete***

## **Michigan State University Extension Bay County**

# **Soil Testing Program**

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## Soil Testing Procedures

Both home owners and agricultural producers may use the same procedures for submitting soil samples:

1. Go through the entire area to be tested (the lawn, garden, field, etc.) collecting soil from many locations. If one area has particularly good drainage and another very poor drainage, make sure to collect samples from both locations. The objective is to create a sample which accurately represents the entire area to be tested.
2. Take random core samples from root level:
  - Field soils:  
8 inches deep
  - Garden, trees, and shrubs: 6-8 inches deep
  - Lawn:  
3 inches below turf
3. Combine the many samples from throughout the testing area in a non-metal container, mix thoroughly. Throw out clumps, wood, grass roots, or stones.
4. Of this mixture, extract two (2) cups of soil to submit as your sample. You may bring your sample in a clean jar, a zip-lock bag, a paper sack – whatever you have handy
5. Note that all samples *must be dry* when they are submitted. Wet soil cannot be mailed to the lab. If your sample is still damp, spread it out on a paper plate for a day or two until it air dries.

Deliver soil sample(s) to MSU Extension - Bay County, located on the third floor of the Bay County Building, 515 Center Avenue, in downtown Bay City.

Hours: 9 a.m. to noon, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except major federal holidays.

MSU Extension - Bay County staff will assist you in filling out the intake form, which typically takes 10 minutes to complete. We will also take care of mailing samples to Michigan State University's Soil and Plant Nutrient Laboratory.

### Standard Soil Test

**\$15.00**

The cost for a standard soil test is \$15.00 per sample submitted, including shipping and handling. You will be asked to pay this fee at the time you drop off your sample. You may pay with cash or by check made payable to *MSU Extension*. Standard soil test results include: pH rating; N, P, K, and Na levels; and fertilizer and lime recommendations.

### Zinc-Manganese Test

**\$20.00**

The cost of a Zn-Mn Test (also called the "Green Box Test") is \$20.00 per sample submitted, including shipping and handling. You will be asked to pay this fee at the time your drop off your sample. You may pay with cash or by check, made payable to *MSU Extension*. Green Box test results include all of the information included in a standard test as well as Zn (Zinc) and MN (Manganese) levels.

**Current fees for the above tests as of March 1, 2010.** Contact our office for current fees for other diagnostic services.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How long does it take for results to come back?

Depending on the time of year, it may take from ten days to two weeks for your soil test(s) to arrive in your regular, postal mail. You also have an option to have your results sent via E-mail.

### Can I pick up a soil testing kit to use myself?

Unfortunately, no. MSU Extension - Bay County does not provide kits for self-testing of soil nutrients or acidity.

### Will a soil test tell what kind of toxins are in my soil?

Unfortunately, no. The only information a soil test will provide concerns the nutrients and the acidity of your sample. If you suspect a toxin may be present in your soil, you should seek out an independent laboratory which is capable of testing for toxins.